

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB
SUBJECT: TEACHER'S STRIKE

REF (A) CARACAS 4394. (B) CARACAS 3748

1. THE INTER-TRADE UNION COMMAND OF EDUCATORS ANNOUNCED A ONE-DAY WORK STOPPAGE MAY 16 OF ALL TEACHERS FROM THE PRIMARY THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY LEVELS IN ELEVEN STATES OF VENEZUELA. THE WORK STOPPAGE IS IN SYMPATHY WITH THE INDEFINITE STRIKE BY THE FEDUERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF PROFESSORS OF INSTITUTES AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGES (FAPICUV) OVER AN IMPASSE IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATON. ISSAC OLIVERA, PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-TRADE UNION COMMAND HAS DECLARED THAT A WORK STOPPAGE IN SEVEN ADDITIONAL STATES WILL TAKE PLACE MAY 18 AND THREATENED AN INDEFINITE WORK STOPPAGE IF THE MINISTRY DOES NOT IMPROVE ON ITS OFFER OF A 20 PERCENT PAY RAISE FOR FAPICUV TEACHERS.

2. TEACHERS SYMPATHETIC TO THE RULING ACCION DEMOCRATICA PARTY (AD) HAVE ANNOUNCED THEY WILL NOT JOIN THE WORK STOPPAGES. SUCCESS OF BOTH THE INDEFINITE STRIKE BY FAPICUV AND THE SYMPATHY WORK STOPPAGE OF OTHER TEACHER'S ORGANIZATION IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE AT THIS STAGE GUSTAVO BRUZUAL,
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DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CLAIMED IN A MAY 15 PRESS INTERVIEW THAT AT LEAST SEVEN OF THE 23 INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED BY FAPICUV ARE IN NORMAL SESSION AND THAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS HAVE TEACHERS IN ATTENDANCE BUT ARE PARALYZED ONLY BECAUSE OF SYMPATHY STRIKES BY STUDENTS. AN AD SOURCE IN EDUCATION MINISTRY CLAIMED THAT THE ONE-DAY SYMPATHY WORK STOPPAGE

ALSO IS NOT HAVING GREAT SUCCESS BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF
TEACHERS ARE AD SYMPATHIZERS.

3. COMMENT: THE NINE-MONTH-OLD DISPUTE BETWEEN FAPICUV
AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION APPEARS TO HAVE ESCALATED
INTO A DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN AD AND OPPOSITION
FORCES IN THE EDUCATION FIELD. THE GOVERNMENT SO FAR HAS
HELD A FIRM LINE ON ITS OFFER OF A 20 PERCENT INCREASE
WHICH FAPICUV CLAIMS (WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION) DOES NOT
COVER THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING OVER THE PAST THREE
YEARS SINCE THE LAST PAY RASISE FOR FAPICUV TEACHERS.
ALTHOUGH DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BROKEN DOWN BETWEEN THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND FAPICUV, THE CONFEDERATION OF
VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV), TO WHICH FAPICUV IS NOT AFFILIATED,
IS NEVERTHELESS PLAYING A MEDIATORY ROLE. ODDS ARE THAT
A SETTLEMENT WILL BE REACHED WITHOUT A TOTAL PARALYSIS OF
THE EDUCATION STRUCTURE IN THE COUNTRY. NEVERTHELESS, THE
60,000 STUDENTS INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED BY FAPICUV
RISK LOSING A SEMESTER OF EDUCATION. BOTH GOVERNMENT
AND TEACHER SPOKESMAN ARE ATTRIBUTING BLAME TO THE OTHER
PARTY WITH AN EYE TO THE SENSITIVITY OF AN EDUCATIONAL
FIASCO DURING THE ELECTION YEAR.
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